Yellowfin tuna | Western and Central Pacific Ocean

**SCIENTIFIC NAME**
Thunnus albacares

**SPECIES NAME(S)**
Yellowfin tuna

**STOCK IDENTIFICATION**
Yellowfin tuna are considered a single population in the western and central Pacific Ocean for stock assessment purposes. There is the potential for some mixing between eastern and western stocks to occur (Davies et al. 2014).

**RELATED LINKS:**
Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC)

**ASSESSMENT**

**Strengths**
- Yellowfin tuna in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean are managed at the international level by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC).
- The Secretariat of the Pacific Community conducts regular assessments of tuna and tuna-like species.
- The biomass is above target levels and fishing mortality rates are sustainable.
- There are limit reference points in place for this species.

The WCPFC and Secretariat have been successful in reducing fishing mortality rates, increasing biomass levels, and implementing harvest control rules.

**Weaknesses**
- In recent years, there has been an increased lack of transparency with regard to the WCPFC decision-making process.
- Significant amounts of juvenile yellowfin tuna are caught in fish aggregating device (FAD)-based purse-seining fisheries.
- No harvest control rules are in place, and there are no target reference points.
- Timely submissions and data accuracy from some member countries, including Indonesia, Vietnam, and the Philippines, have been identified as an issue.
- Bycatch of ecologically important species, such as sharks, sea turtles, and sea birds, continues to be a problem in many fisheries targeting yellowfin tuna.

**Management measures (CMMs)** are in place, but information on compliance and monitoring by member countries has historically not been made publicly available. Significant volumes of juvenile catches on FAD-based purse seining occur, which impact the entire stock.

**Scores**
- **Management Quality:**
  - Manager Compliance: 
    - ≥ 6 to ≥ 8
  - Fishers Compliance: 
    - ≥ 6 to ≥ 10
- **Stock Health:**
  - Current Health: 
    - 8.8
  - Future Health: 
    - 91

**RECOMMENDATIONS**
- Work with WCPFC Members, Cooperating Non-Members, and Participating Territories to:
  - Implement catch limits to prevent harvest from increasing beyond 2012 levels.
  - Develop and implement comprehensive, precautionary harvest strategies with specific timelines for all tuna stocks, including the adoption and implementation of limit and target reference points, harvest control rules, monitoring strategies, operational objectives, performance indicators, and management strategy evaluation.
  - Strengthen compliance processes and make information on non-compliance more transparent.

**RETAILERS & SUPPLY CHAIN**
- Mandated observer coverage rates by the WCPFC in the longline fishery is low (5%) compared to other fisheries (i.e. purse seine, 100%) and many fleets still do not reach this threshold.
- Several depleted species (striped marlin, oceanic whitetip and silky sharks) are caught as bycatch.
- Korea has not reduced fishery pressure on yellowfin tuna.
compliance public and continue to provide evidence of compliance with all WCPFC Conservation and Management Measures in a timely manner.

- Implement a 100% observer coverage requirement for at-sea transshipment activities, as well as other measures that ensure transshipment activity is transparent and well-managed, and that all required data are collected and transmitted to the appropriate bodies in a timely manner.

- Increase compliance with the mandatory minimum 5% longline observer coverage rates by identifying and correcting non-compliance.

- Implement a 100% observer coverage requirement – human and/or electronic – within five years for longline fisheries. Adopt a 100% observer coverage requirement for purse seine vessels where it is not already required and require the use of the best-available observer safety equipment, communications, and procedures.

- Adopt effective measures for the use of non-entangling FAD designs as a precautionary measure to minimize the entanglement of sharks and other non-target species, and support research on biodegradable materials and transition to their use to mitigate marine debris.

- Allow effectively implemented, and ensure compliance with, existing IIFAT bycatch requirements and take additional mitigation action, such as improving monitoring at sea, collecting and sharing operational-level, species-specific data, and adopting stronger compliance measures, including consequences for non-compliance for all gear types.

- Ensure all products are traceable back to legal sources. Verify source information and full chain traceability through traceability desk audits or third party traceability certification. For fisheries without robust traceability systems in place, invest in meaningful improvements to bring the fisheries and supply chain into compliance with best practices.

- Ensure timely submission of longline datasets (i.e. catches, effort, size) needed for robust stock assessments as required by the WCPFC including operational (i.e. set-by-set) data. Continue cooperation with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) regarding the provision of longline operational data for use in stock assessments.